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## NCLR ANNOUNCES OPPOSITION TO FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

**Washington, DC** – [At a news conference today, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) announced that its Board of Directors has voted to oppose the Federal Marriage Amendment and any other similar efforts to amend the U.S. Constitution. The text of NCLR's remarks follows:]

NCLR strongly believes that amending the U.S. Constitution for the purpose defined in the Federal Marriage Amendment is unnecessary and dangerous. States already have the power to define and regulate marriage within their jurisdictions, and existing law indicates that no state is forced to recognize marriages that violate its own laws and which take place in another state.

More importantly, the proposed amendment is dangerous, in part because it could be interpreted in ways that go well beyond restrictions on marriage. We are concerned that the amendment would have other negative and discriminatory effects – including limiting access of same-sex couples and their families to employer-sponsored benefits, federal or state assistance, inheritance rights, hospital visitation and other medical rights, or limiting the capacity to petition for family members abroad through the immigration system.

Finally, NCLR cannot support any proposed constitutional amendment that actually restricts the rights of persons. The history of law and jurisprudence in this regard shows consistent, albeit uneven and often slow, progress toward expansion of rights of groups subject to discrimination. We believe that the fundamental interest of U.S. Latinos, and all Americans, lies in promoting, not impeding, this trend.

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